GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:396
ANSWERED ON:21.08.2000
CUTTING OF TREES
RATTAN LAL KATARIA

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the fury of floods has increased in various parts of the country due to large scale felling of trees on mountains;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to tackle this problem;

(c) whether indiscriminate felling of trees has posed a serious threat to the environment; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

(a), (b), (c) & (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.396 FOR 21.8.2000 REGAR CUTTING OF TREES BY SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA

(a) There is no report that the fury of floods has increased in various parts of the country due to large scale felling of trees on mountains. However, due to the heavy biotic pressure on the forests, certain amount of forest degradation in various parts can not be ruled out, which may lead to increased run off and consequent floods.

(b) As per National Forest Policy 1988, Government of India monitors the forest cover through Forest Survey of India (FSI) in a biennial publication of State of Forest Report, regulate the diversion of forest lands for the non forestry purposes, promote people`s participation in forest protection and development, sanction funds for afforestation activities and various other policy interventions. The Government of India proposes to spend Rs.1360 crore in the forestry & wildlife sector for the protection and development of forests during the Ninth Plan period.

(c) No, Sir. As per the latest seventh assessment of the forest cover by the Forest Survey of India done in 1999 by the FSI, as compared to 1997 assessment, there has been an increase of 3896 sq. km of forest cover in the country. Thus, forest cover of the country has increased from 19.27% to 19.39% of the total geographic area, during last two years.

(d) Following steps are being taken to protect the forest resources:

i) All State Governments and Union Territories have been requested toincrease the allocation to the forestry sector substantially and to treat forest protection as a Plan item
ii) The States have been advised to create Forest Development Agencies (a federation of JFM committees) for integrated development of forests and villages situated in and around forest areas.
iii) Joint Forest Management programme is being implemented in the country as per the provisions of 1988 Forest Policy and as on 1.1.2000 36,130 JFM committees are protecting around 10.249 million ha. of forests in 22 states.
iv) States have been requested to streamline the forest protection machinery in order to deal with theft and smuggling of timber and poaching of wild animals.